

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY JIDDA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1099

INFO AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

C O N F I D E N T I A L JIDDA 3128

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, OVIP, SA, ID

SUBJECT: POSTPONEMENT OF SUHARTO VISIT TO SAUDI ARABIA

REF JAKARTA 5229

1. THE FOREIGN OFFICE DIRECTOR OF ASIAN AND AFRICAN AFFAIRS, AHMED SIRAJ, CONFIRMS THAT THE VISIT OF INDO-NESIAN PRESIDENT SUHARTO HAS INDEED BEEN POSTPONED UNTIL SOME TIME IN NOVEMBER.
2. ACCORDING TO SIRAJ THE ORIGINAL JUNE DATES FOR THE VISIT WERE SET BEFORE THE ASSASSINATION OF FAISAL AND DID NOT FORESEE THE EXTREME PREOCCUPATION OF THE NEW GOVERNMENT WITH GETTING ITSELF ORGANIZED. JUNE IS ALSO THE TIME OF THE ISLAMIC FOREIGN MINISTERS MEETING WHICH WILL TAKE A LOT OF SAG ATTENTION. MOREOVER, THE TOP LEVELS OF THE GOVERNMENT WILL BE DEEPLY ENMESHED WITH THE FINAL STAGES OF THE PREPARATION OF THE BUDGET AND PUTTING THE FINISHING TOUCHES ON THE KINGDOM'S AMBITIOUS FIVE YEAR PLAN.
3. COMMENT: THESE ARE ALL GOOD REASONS WHY A VISIT IN JUNE MIGHT NOT BE CONVENIENT. HOWEVER, GIVEN THE SAG'S SURPRISING CAPACITY FOR HANDLING VISITORS IN ADVERSE CIRCUMSTANCES, WE ARE NOT COMPLETELY SATISFIED THAT THEY ARE THE ONLY ONES FOR POSTPONEMENT OF THE VISIT. WE DOUBT, THOUGH, THAT DISSATISFACTION WITH THE RELIGIOUS FERVOR AND

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ORTHODOXY OF INDONESIA'S LEADERS WOULD HAVE BEEN A SERIOUS

FACTOR IN THE POSTPONEMENT DECISION. ONCE THE DECISION TO
POSTPONE HAD BEEN MADE, THERE ARE PLAUSIBLE
REASONS FOR PUTTING IT OFF UNTIL THE FALL INCLUDING
BUDGET PRESENTATION AND IMPLEMENTATION, THE SUMMER VACATION
EXODUS, RAMADAN, AND THE FOLLOWING HOLY DAYS WHICH
ONLY END IN MID OCTOBER.
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